

ARIZONA DISABILITY CLASSIFICATIONS

Definitions are documented according to the Arizona Revised Statutes (ARS) §15-761 (1-38)

Autism:(A) means a "developmental disability that significantly affects verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction and that adversely affects educational performance. Characteristics include irregularities and impairments in communication, engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines and unusual responses to sensory experiences." Autism does not include children with characteristics of emotional disability.

Classroom Indications: Students may have scattered strengths and weaknesses. Daily instruction should be consistent and predictable. Verbal instructions, as well as printed materials, help the student process information. Schedules are key to working with autistic children.

Emotional Disability: (ED) (a) means a "condition whereby a child exhibits one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects the child's performance in the educational environment; i} An inability to learn which cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory or health factors. (ii) An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers. (iii) Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances. (iv) A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression. (v) A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems. (b) Includes children who are schizophrenic but does not include children who are socially maladjusted unless they are also determined to have an emotional disability as determined by evaluation."

Classroom Indications: Behavior modification is useful in shaping behaviors and developing social skills. Students can then follow directions and carry through on assignments. Many students with ED need counseling as a related service on IEPs.

Hearing Impairment: (HI) means a "loss of hearing acuity, which interferes with the child's performance in the educational environment and requires the provision of special educational and related services. "

Classroom Indications: The hearing loss can range from hard of hearing to deafness. The loss can be in one or both ears. The loss may be of separate magnitudes in each ear. Oral language is learned by hearing it spoken. The type of education must vary to accommodate the time of the hearing loss and type of loss. Communication is the key for each student, whether it is oral, sign language or a combination of the two.

Mental Retardation: (MIMR, MOMR, SMR) means a significant impairment of general intellectual functioning that exists concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and that adversely affects the child's performance in the educational environment. Mild Mental Retardation means performance on standard measures of intellectual and adaptive behavior between two and three standard deviations below the mean for children of the same age. Moderate Mental Retardation means three and four standard deviations below the mean for children of the same age. Severe Mental Retardation means four standard deviations below the mean for children of the same age.

Classroom Indications: Usually educational services begin in infancy, continue through preschool and on into adulthood. This extended education gives children with mental retardation an opportunity to develop to their fullest potential. Frequent review and feedback makes sure that the student can apply the knowledge to tasks inside and outside of the classroom.

Multiple Disabilities: (MDSSI) means "learning and developmental problems resulting from multiple disabilities as determined by evaluation; that cannot be provided for adequately in a program designed to meet the needs of children with less complex disabilities. Multiple disabilities include any of the following conditions that require the provision of special education and related services: (a) Two or more of the following conditions (i)Hearing impairment (ii) Orthopedic impairment (iii) Moderate mental retardation (iv) Visual impairment; (b) A child with a disability listed in subdivision (a) of this paragraph existing concurrently with a condition of Mild Mental Retardation, Emotionally Disabled, or Specific Learning Disabled."

Classroom Indications: On-going support in more than one major life skill will usually be needed by students in this category. The IEP team will include a variety of supports to meet educational, language, social, vocational, and functional skill development.

Orthopedic Impairment: (OI) means "one or more severe orthopedic impairments and includes those that are caused by congenital anomaly, disease and others causes, such as amputation or cerebral palsy, and that adversely affect a child's performance in the educational environment."

Classroom Indications: The severity of the impairment determines the need for accommodations and modifications in the classroom. Some students may not need special services in the medical or education arena. Others may require intensive support to meet their unique academic needs. Related services/least restrictive environment will be determined by the IEP team.

Other Health Impairments: (OHI) means "limited strength, vitality or alertness, including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli, due to chronic or acute health problems which adversely affect educational performance."

Classroom Indications: Some children have no restrictions in what they can do and learn. Others may require intensive medical care, be extremely limited in their activities, and need educational help. The implementing regulations of IDEA '97 require that assistive technology be considered during the development of the IEP.

Preschool Delays: Moderate and Severe: (PSM,PSD) A preschool child is "one who is at least three years of age but who has not reached the required age for kindergarten (five by Sept. 1) Preschool Moderate Delay means performance by a preschool child on a norm-referenced test that measures at least one and one-half, but not more than three, standard deviations below the mean for children of the same chronological age in two or more of the following areas: cognitive, physical, communication, social or emotional development, adaptive development. A severe delay is three standard deviations below the mean."

Classroom Indications: Skills that most children acquire in the first five years of life need to be specially taught to children with disabilities.. A program which helps improve thinking, language, movement, self-help, play, and social skills is important for development of the child's potential.

Preschool Speech/Language Delay: (PSL) A preschool speech/language delay means "performance by a preschool child on a norm referenced language test with at least one and one half standard deviations below the mean for children of the same chronological age or whose speech, out of context, is unintelligible to a listener who is unfamiliar with the child."

This category is only appropriate when the child is not eligible for other preschool categories. The team will determine eligibility based on a preponderance of information.

Classroom Indications: Language models for children who are delayed in speech is critical. Classrooms that include typically developing peers are most helpful to children who need language models. Integrated communication therapy is most appropriate within the preschool setting.

Specific Learning Disability: (SLD) (a) "means a specific learning disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell or do mathematical calculations. (b) Includes such conditions as perceptual disabilities, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia and aphasia. (c) Does not include learning problems which are primarily the result of visual, hearing, motor or emotional disabilities, of mental retardation or of environmental, cultural or economic disadvantage."

Classroom Indications: Each person with SLD has a different combination or cluster of characteristics which can range from mild to severe. Effective intervention strategies should include a total approach to meeting the educational, psychological, medical, and social needs of the student. Modifications may include extended time, a use of a calculator, a reader or person to record answers, or an audio cassette for lesson repetition.

Speech and Language Impairment: (SLI) means a communication disorder such as "stuttering, impaired articulation, severe disorders of syntax, semantics or vocabulary, or functional language skills, or a voice impairment to the extent it interferes with communication or causes a child to be maladjusted."

Classroom Indications: Language is essential for learning, so early diagnosis and treatment of speech/language impairments is critical. Communication is used to build peer relationships, process meaning, and progress in academics in school. Transfer to the general classroom is important for language in a natural environment .

Traumatic Brain Injury: (TBI) means (a) "an acquired injury to the brain that is caused by an external physical force and that results in total and/or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment, or both, that adversely affects educational performance. (b) Applies to open or closed head injuries resulting in mild, moderate, or severe impairments in one or more areas, including cognition, language, memory, attention, reasoning, abstract thinking, judgment, problem solving, sensory, perceptual and motor abilities, psychosocial behavior, physical functions, information processing, and speech. (c) Does not include brain injuries that are congenital or degenerative or brain injuries induced by birth trauma."

Classroom Indications: Head injuries may lead to persistent symptoms, such as: memory problems, attention span problems, lack of energy, disorganization, depression, anxiety, and social/behavioral difficulties. Communication problems may include: reading comprehension, excessive speech, and inappropriate focusing on irrelevant subjects.

Visual Impairment: (VI) means "a loss in visual acuity or a loss of visual field that interferes with the child's performance in the educational environment and that requires the provision of special education and related services."

Classroom Indications: Children who are blind from birth sometimes need different techniques than do students who were sighted and lost their vision. Braille 'n Speak, talking calculators, tape recorders, telescopic aids, magnifiers, tinted lenses or overlays are examples of the assistive technology needed by the students. More VI students are being educated in the general education classroom. The assistive technology advances of the last few years have made this possible.

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